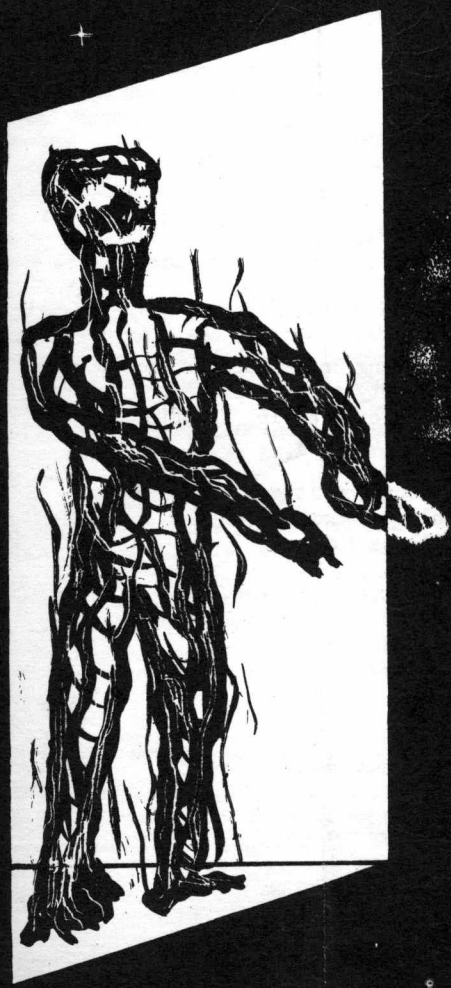


SFCON

PROGRESS REPORT No. 2



JANUARY - 1954

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304 EAST FORTY-FIFTH STREET, NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

JOHN W. CAMPBELL, JR. . EDITOR . ASTOUNDING SCIENCE-FICTION

September 14, 1953

Mr. E. Cole
Secretary-Treasurer,
P. O. Box 335
Station "A"
Richmond 2, California.

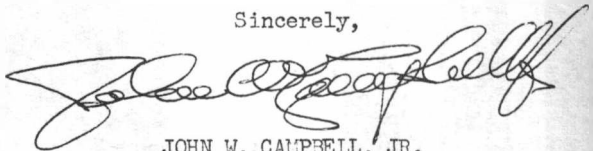
Dear Mr. Cole:

I had already planned on visiting San Francisco during the convention. It's been thirty-three years since I was there, and time to see the city again, I suspect. There may even be some changes by now!

And I most sincerely thank your Committee for the invitation as Guest of Honor. Unless something of the order of a broken leg intervenes, I'll be there.

I'll try to do honor to the Convention, too. If you have any particular plans yet, as to what you'd like me to do, please let me know.

Sincerely,



JOHN W. CAMPBELL, JR.
Editor.

On The SFCon

By Poul Anderson

There was a man once who, after five daughters in succession, finally had a son. Naturally, he went on a three-day jag to celebrate. Toward the end of it, a friend met him and congratulated him and asked who the baby looked like. "Oh," I don't know," said the father. "I haven't looked at his face yet."

After three years of working, politicking, hoping, and intricate maneuvers in smoke-filled back rooms, San Francisco has finally been awarded a national science-fiction convention -- at Philadelphia, where not one person from the Bay Area was able to attend! It was rather like a bag of gold landing on your head--desirable stuff, but a bit stunning at first. Nevertheless, reaction was fast, and already an amazing amount of solid accomplishment is behind us. Everybody else has said they'd put on the best convention of all time. We say this too--but we're the only ones who are right.

The wheelhorses to date have been Les and Es Cole, Gary Nelson, and George Finigan, though many other people have helped as much as they can and we expect to broaden the basis of the committee in the near future. Life has become somewhat complicated for the Coles of late, due to yet another member of the family making a sudden appearance at the usual inconvenient moment; but such mere details have not stood in the way of preparing for the convention, and work goes on apace.

The Twelfth Annual World Science-Fiction Convention, hereafter known as the SFCon (that being easier to write) will be held at San Francisco over the Labor Day weekend, 1954. But that's only part of it. The annual Westecon will precede it by one day and run into the three-day SFCon. In short, you get two conventions (not one but two, count 'em, two) conventions, with a complete program of events, for the price of one!

Guest of honor at the Westecon will be Jack Williamson, an old-timer whose work has grown in stature with the years so that he is still one of science-fiction's top writers--and a darn swell fellow personally, whom you'll be glad to meet.

Guest of honor at the SFCon itself will be none other than John W. Campbell, Jr., editor of Astounding Science-Fiction, author of more classic stories than we can readily count up, and the man who has almost single-handed made modern science-fiction what it is. A dynamic personality, a fine forceful speaker, a stimulating fireball of ideas, and a good Joe all around, JWC is an experience whom you should not deny yourself.

Besides these, we expect to have many other notables--a glance at the present membership list will show you some familiar names, and we are sure there will be many others. Come and meet your favorite editors,

authors, artists, and fans. Alive to complaints about previous conventions, your committee will be making a special effort to have the notables accessible to all who wish to talk to them.

(Lest we scare off some notables, we hasten to add that it'll be fun for all concerned, and that you too will be free to do what you please. We just want to provide an opportunity for sociability which has often been lacking in the past.)

The committee has had some trouble in the matter of getting a hotel for the affair. The Hotel Whitcomb was promised to us for two years, and seemed almost ideal. The day after we got the convention, the Coles called them, and several committee people went over later in person; but in spite of all promises, it had just been given to the National Bridge Club. There was nothing to be done about this unless we wished to erect barricades in the lobby and fight off the National Bridge Club as it came, and the prospect of bearded fans locked in a death-grip with Culbertson - wielding bridge-players was too appalling. So your committee went house-hunting, and had a tough time of it for a while. All other hotels in the area were booked solid because next Labor Day falls in Market Week--whatever that is. Someone considered playing up an open-air convention as a novel stunt never tried before (the Rainvention) but this was voted down.

The fortune which looks after clean-living, red-blooded American boys took charge, however, and we have now definitely obtained one of the best sites in the Bay Area; the well-known Sir Francis Drake. By personally underwriting the expenses your committee has gotten some unique privileges for this convention:

A bloc of four floors of excellent outside rooms reserved especially for us, plus five suites. This means

that you will be close to your friends and to the goings-on, and that there will probably be no trouble whatsoever with hotel detectives, since we won't be disturbing anyone else. Naturally, more rooms will be available when these are filled; and there are other good hotels right across the way if we should happen to overflow the entire joint. Some of these other places are extremely economical, by the way though the Drake is not exorbitant by any means.

A meeting hall given to us free upon a guarantee of 150 people at the banquet. This hall has a stage, and will hold some 550 attendees at the formal (but highly entertaining) program. It is big, beautiful, impressive, stupendous, and generally Californian. If enough people wish it, we'll even move in palm trees; but you have to bring your own dancing girls.

Another room adjoining it will hold an extra 100 who can easily follow the program. More important, there's also an adjoining bar which will hold about 75 and will be operated at all times since we are guaranteeing the bartenders' salaries. A public address system will enable you to follow the proceedings from the bar--i.e., to be with the program in spirits.

The banquet will cost an absolute maximum of \$4 a plate, and we can probably get it for less. Not only should the talks there be good, but the food too -- the Drake is famous for its banquets.

Arrangements will be made for meeting rooms for small clubs and groups which wish to get together.

Besides the banquet, there will be a masquerade which really is a masquerade -- live music for those who wish to dance, colorful costumes for those who wish to look, and many prizes of special interest to science-fiction fans.

MEMBERSHIP

Other traditional features of conventions will be there, but given a novel and often hilarious twist; and much will be introduced which is new to everyone.

By the way, don't be alarmed when we speak of guaranteeing this and that. You won't be stuck for more than your one-dollar membership and whatever you care to spend on food, housing, and entertainment. There will be no collections taken up. These guarantees are a matter of the committee sticking their personal necks out, in order to give you a better convention.

But we do ask one special favor of you. To meet a policy of the local hotel association, the committee has had to guarantee a reservation deposit of \$5 for every room in our block, and will be stuck for this if you make a reservation personally and then can't show up. All reservations at the Drake should therefore please be made through the committee which will give you prompt and careful service.

More information and details later as they come up; this is just to let you know what your committee has already accomplished, and to give you an idea of what we expect to do. This will be the best convention on record--so come yourself, get your friends to come, and help us get those dollars for membership. We need them to give you a holiday you'll never forget.

In winding up, may we add that the Drake is conveniently located downtown in one of the most fascinating cities on Earth. You're within walking distance of Chinatown, and you have to see it before you believe how fabulous it is; just beyond is the Latin Quarter, famous for Italian food, and Fisherman's Wharf with its sea food isn't far off; a cable car runs right outside the hotel; we have parks, zoos, museums, a planetarium, picturesque bars, superb restaurants, bathing beaches, and some of the oddest people in the world.

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Don Ford | 62. Dr. John D. Clark |
| 2. Harlan Ellison | 63. Lloyd Eshbach |
| 3. Bob Briggs | 64. Franklin M. Dietz, Jr. |
| 4. Merrill Gwosdof | 65. Theodore R. Cogswell |
| 5. Peggy Gwosdof | 66. Randall Garrett |
| 6. Stephen F. Shultheis | 67. Algis Budrys |
| 7. Frank Andrasovsky | 68. Gordon R. Dickson |
| 8. E. E. Evans | 69. Bob Tucker |
| 9. Thelma D. Evans | 70. Sandy Cutrell |
| 10. Edward E. Smith | 71. Tom Clareson |
| 11. Jeannie Smith | 72. Lester Del Rey |
| 12. Joan Hanlon | 73. Evelyn Del Rey |
| 13. Walter J. Dougherty | 74. Eric Ely |
| 14. Lou Daugherty | 75. Marvin Bowen |
| 15. Henry W. Chabot | 76. William F. Benthake |
| 16. Lee Jacobs | 77. Mrs. Jack Williamson |
| 17. Dick Clarkson | 78. Hans Rusch |
| 18. Don Frazer | 79. Donald B. Moore |
| 19. Kris Neville | 80. Poul Anderson |
| 20. Ben Jason | 81. Forrest J. Ackerman |
| 21. William D. Grant | 82. Wendayne Ackerman |
| 22. John L. Millard | 83. Miriam Allen deFord |
| 23. Edward N. McKeown | 84. Mrs. Lillian Carroll |
| 24. Sam Moskowitz | 85. Bert Carroll |
| 25. Anthony Boucher | 86. Lily Foyer |
| 26. Ralphine McGill | 87. Dick Fugett |
| 27. Bettyjo McCarthy | 88. Keith Brandon |
| 28. Joe Gibson | 89. Ernest A. Wheatley |
| 29. Nicholas Lordi | 90. James V. Taurasi |
| 30. W. R. Berger | 91. Wally Weber |
| 31. F. M. Robinson | 92. Dale Rostomily |
| 32. Edward Kuss | 93. Ralph Bailey |
| 33. Juanita R. Wellons | 94. Dave Dryfoos |
| 34. Willette Carmichael | 95. Isaac Asimov |
| 35. John Carmichael | 96. Willy Ley |
| 36. Frank R. Prieto, Jr. | 97. Tom Piper |
| 37. Irvin Heyms | 98. Carol Smith |
| 38. Bud Waldo | 99. Charles G. Higgins |
| 39. Nellie R. Dillingham | 100. Carol Higgins |
| 40. Phyllis Berg | 101. Richard H. Main |
| 41. William Berg | 102. Es Cole |
| 42. Franklin Kerkhof | 103. Les Cole |
| 43. Isabel Fine | 104. Barney Bernard |
| 44. Roger Sims | 105. Paul Gordon |
| 45. Irene Baron | 106. Mel Hunter |
| 46. Larry T. Shaw | 107. Nancy Hunter |
| 47. H. L. Gold | 108. Rory M. Faulkner |
| 48. Evelyn Paige Gold | 109. Tetsu Yano |
| 49. Stan Skirvin | 110. Ross Hodgkins |
| 50. Joan Skirvin | 111. Rog Phillips |
| 51. Margaret Ford | 112. Geo. W. Price |
| 52. Ben Keifer | 113. Harriet Fellas |
| 53. Pat Lake | 114. Bess Benjamin |
| 54. Bea Mahaffey | 115. John W. Hartigan |
| 55. Alex Osheroff | 116. Lewis J. Grant |
| 56. Evan H. Appelman | 117. Leonard Zettel |
| 57. James Dunn | 118. Mrs. E. Janda |
| 58. Lee Anne Trampler | 119. T. E. Dikty |
| 59. William F. Hall | 120. Julian May Dikty |
| 60. Lewis J. Upton, Jr. | 121. Wrai Ballard |
| 61. Melvin Korshak | 122. David Rike |

Con-Notes

First of all, the Convention Committee would like to thank all those who have offered their help to the Convention. It is all appreciated. And we will attempt to make use of each and every offer, if possible. Unfortunately, this can't always be done for a number of reasons, mainly involving time and space. We will try to use each offer of help to the best advantage. If we fail, please bear with us in this respect and do not feel that we are not attempting to make use of your offer.

We will be very happy, indeed, to accept any suggestion on how to make the convention more successful. Send in any old ideas that you have lying around. If you have ever been to a convention before, you certainly must have some old gripe or a notion on how some part of the convention could be improved. We have. And we are trying to do our utmost to make the convention successful in all respects, but we're not superman, so we would like to hear your views on the subject, which brings up another point.

The SFCOn will not be run by Pros, if that makes you happy. And it will not be run by Fans, if that also makes you happy. It will, however, be run by people interested in, and trying to produce the best science fiction convention ever. And we hope that makes you happy. It will be a convention where everyone will enjoy himself, if this is possible.

It is our belief that the best entertainment at conventions is light and humorous. Toward this end the speeches will be kept fairly short

and in that category. No seminars on the mathematical foundations of the theory of space flight or any dissertations on the mechanics of plotting science fiction stories, are to be on the program. However, it might not be wise to pass up "The Thermodynamic Considerations of the Free Energy Change Involved in the Metabolic and Physiological Processes of Procreation in Free Space" just because of its title. And remember that we want to have the program that you want to have, so let us know what you want on the program and we'll try our best to arrange it for you.

By the way, ads in this progress report are available at small cost, in one or in all. There will be a minimum of four more reports. Copy deadline for the next report is the fifteenth of February, 1954. Any inquiries about the progress reports or the program booklet should be addressed to "Editor, SFCOn Publications, Box 335, Station A, Richmond 2, California. More about the program in the next report.

As this progress report is going only to those people who have already send in their dollar for convention membership, we don't expect to use it to advertise the convention. But it is hoped that you who have already joined will get others to join also. Especially, friends whom you know that are interested in science-fiction. Everyone who joins will receive the progress reports and a membership card. And if someone does not attend the convention the program and other matter distributed at the convention will be mailed to them.

Box 761
Portales, N. M.
Sept. 12, 1953

Mr. E. Cole
Secretary-Treasurer
S F Con
PO Box 335
Station A
Richmond 2, Cal.

Dear Mr. Cole:

I'm deeply pleased by your completely unexpected invitation to be a guest of honor at the 1954 Westercon, and I am hastening to accept. Barring something unforeseen, I'll be there.

I haven't seen any report on the Philadelphia convention, and I've glad to know that the next national convention was won for San Francisco. It's a magnificent city that I haven't seen for too long. I suppose that the Little Men, individually or altogether, are going to be the sponsors. That's a pretty arduous privilege, I imagine, but I think it has been well earned, and I'm certain that the convention under their management ought to be about the best to date.

I'll be glad to do anything I can to help make the convention a bigger success, and I'm delighted with the prospect of getting to see so many old friends again.

Yours cordially,



Jack Williamson

Noreen Falasca, PRES. ~ E. J. Burden ~ Ed Petras ~ Vaughn Burde
Ron Cernosky, V. PRES. ~ Ben Jason ~ Steve Schultheis
Honey Wood, SECY. ~ Betty Sullivan ~ Ray Light
George Olsson ~ Richard Palko ~ Nick Falasca
Michael Palko ~ Bill Berger ~ Richard Ward
Don Anthony ~ Roy Hemple ~ Philis Light
Warren Rayle ~ Val Lang ~ Dave Massero

The
Ferrans

Make Your Plans
For The Cleveland
Convention in '55